

CHAPTER 4

THE SETTING (GENESIS 1--2)

- 1 *Fairest Lord Jesus,
Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God and man the Son;
Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.*
- 4 *Beautiful Savior,
Lord of all nations,
Son of God and Son of man!
Glory and honor,
Praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be Thine!*

Munster Gesangbuch", 17th century¹

¹Joyful Noise Music Company, *Logos Hymnal*, (Fort Worth, TX: Joyful Noise Music Company) 1994.

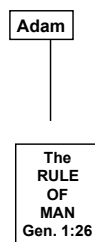
- 26 Then God said,
"Let Us make man in Our image,
according to Our likeness;
and let them rule over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the sky
and over the cattle and over all the earth,
and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
- 27 And God created man in His own image,
in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.
- 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them,
"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth,
and subdue it; and rule
over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the sky,
and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
- 29 Then God said,
"Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface
of all the earth,
and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;
30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and
to every thing that moves on the earth which has life,
I have given every green plant for food ";and it was so.

The Setting (Genesis 1—2): The Hero, God, and His idyllic creation

SETTING

THE RULE OF THE KING
THROUGH THE
NATION OF ISRAEL

**Individual
Rule**



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Sit back and look at Genesis 1 and 2 and see how you feel at the end of the chapter . . . peaceful? Or perhaps overwhelmed by the immediacy of a creation that occurs in only six days? Picture the darkness changing to light, the great sea changing into the clouds above and the sea below, the foliage coming forth from the ground, the sun, moon and stars appearing in the great sky and finally the animals populating the earth and eating of the lush foliage? And then finally two humans of the reader’s own kind are brought forth by God . . . a man and a woman.

Then the scene changes in Genesis 2, repeating the sixth day but now much more specific as it details God’s desires for, and equipping of, this man and woman. He builds the man first like a potter at his wheel. Then He makes a well-watered garden in which to place him. Then God gives specific instructions regarding what the man is to do as God’s representative.

“Till the garden and keep it.”

It seems reasonable enough. But then,

“Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat but of the Tree in the midst of the garden, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you may not eat. For in the day you eat of it you shall surely die.”

That seems to bring this idyllic setting to an abrupt pause. All appeared so nice up to this point but now the hint, and thus the possibility, of death becomes all too real.

Yet this God moves on, giving the man a woman to help and be the man's companion. He brings her from the man's side in the first wedding ceremony and off they go into a world to which they were just introduced. What awaits them?

This is how a storyteller reflects a story's flavor, called the "setting." It is the "setup" for the rest of the story. It instills in the reader a core foundation from which the characters will begin to walk into the unfolding plot. And it is in that unfolding plot where they will find what awaits them. In this case this setting is intended to orient the reader to the core of this God's desires for His creation and thus set the reader up for where God wants to take this story. No one can read this and not feel good about what is going on. God brings forth all that the reader has appreciated from his youth forward, the skies, the clouds, the foliage, the animals, and most of all man himself. Man must appreciate that he has breath in his own body and can enjoy moving and discovering this creation. But more than this it reflects a gracious, powerful and good Creator, the Hero, God.

And the Creator has established more details to His desires. There is a garden of foliage and fruit, yet a tree from which man is not to eat. There is a woman who is to help the man to rule, and the explanation of a marriage ceremony by which this man is to commit to this one woman, and she to him. There is no long explanation for these restrictions and implementations; they are simply the desires of the sovereign Creator for His creation; how He has ordered it. They are neither up for question nor for a vote; He is unquestionably the Sovereign.

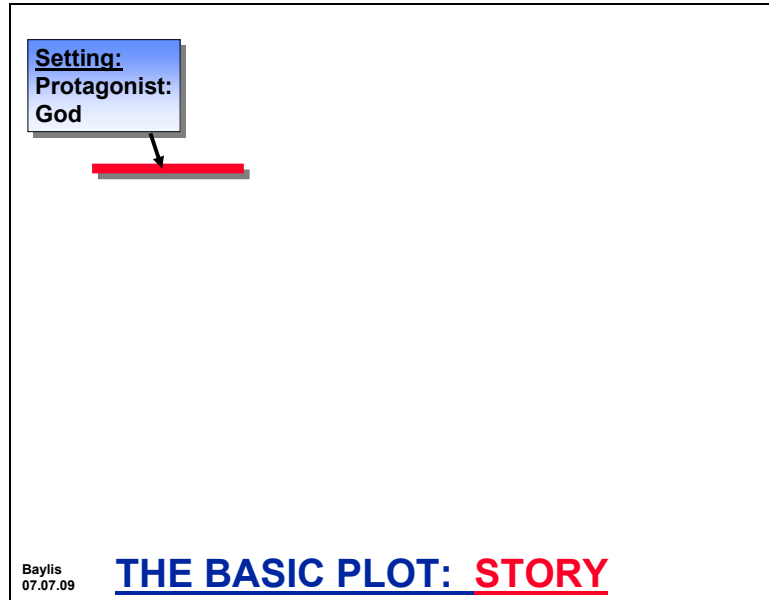
There you have it, the Sovereign gracious Creator who orders His creation. Will it continue? There is only one hint that it will not and that is the short, but weighty, statement, "In the day that you eat of it, you will surely die!" As settings frequently do, the idyllic situation at the beginning gives a hint of the weakness that can undo it all and make it much, much worse.

Genesis 1: The Creator Desires a Physical Creation

The Hero, God

The most important thing to discover in the first chapter of the Bible is not the creation. It is the Creator . . . God. The beginning words state exactly that, “In the beginning, God . . . “ This story is about this God, His character, and His desires. The most important thing to know about is not the details of the creation, or how it came to be. Creations can come and go. The most important thing to know is this God who creates from nothing. From those first words, “In the beginning, God . . . “, to the last words of the Scriptures the point of any, and all, of the stories is, not to find out about the wondrous things that come to be, but to find the source of those things.

The concept of understanding God instead of concentrating on His resultant benefits is caught by the story of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus in Luke 17:11-19. Sometimes people errantly think this is a lesson about being thankful because only one leper returned to Jesus and gave thanks, whilst the rest went on their way. Thus they feel Jesus was giving a simple moral lesson, “be thankful.” But self-improvement was not the point of the story that Luke penned in his gospel. It was not about the deed but about the Doer. To nine of the ten lepers that day would be remembered as the greatest day of their life, for it was the day they were healed of leprosy, the day their social life returned, the day they could go to the synagogue, eat with others, and mingle once more. But to one leper that day would not be remembered for the healing that changed his social life, but the day that he met the Man who could heal leprosy and change his life. Creation is not about an idyllic place in which we can enjoy life, although it certainly includes that. It is about the One who created it all. This is the One we want to know. This is the purpose of Genesis 1, to reveal the Creator.



God is the Main Character. It is He whom we, as readers, want to get to know. It is not enough to argue about creation and science and how it came to be. It is not enough to question whether Cain married his sister. This God is revealing Himself so the reader can know Him. To miss that simple fact at the expense of solving other problems is to miss the point. These lesser studies are not to be dismissed, but must be considered as they disclose the greater purpose, to reveal the glory of the Creator. The ultimate grasping of the knowledge of that One God must be the sole pursuit of the reader. Anything else is wasted time.

“You shall love YHWH your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” (Deut. 6:5)

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added onto you.” (Matt. 6:33)

So what is it about this God that we want to learn in the setting?

“In the beginning, God . . . “ He is the Hero. It is about Him. Note that He alone was in the beginning. Everything is sourced from Him. Before He arrived on the scene in 1:1, there was nothing else. Everything came into being from Him. He is the determiner of all that will be. His desires are the only desires that count. There is nothing but this all-powerful voice that one knows as *Elohim* . . . God.

The Creation by the Hero (1:1—2:3)

When one surveys the movement of Genesis 1 it is very simple. There is an original statement that God created the heavens (lit.: “skies”) and the earth. Then the story begins with an empty and void nothingness² (1:2). From there one can watch the filling of this empty void over six days. It goes from a dark emptiness to a universe with skies (i.e., heavens) above, filled with clouds, sun, moon, stars, foliage, seas with fish and skies with birds, and finally, man and woman. The seventh day completes the work of God and He rests.

The Desires of the Hero

While it is clear that this physical picture is the desire (“it was good”) of the Creator, the Creator obviously wants “actions” to take place within His creation. That is, it is not to be a static picture, but an active representation of His desires.

Plants and Animals to have “seed” to reproduce “after their kind”

The major item that pervades this chapter is that of the living things. Vegetable matter is to reproduce from its seed, “after its kind.” Birds and fish are to reproduce from their seed, “after their kind.” Thus reproduction of one’s physical self from a seed within them is a required movement given to living things by this Creator. All vegetables and animals have this as their innate function. They will reproduce physically, which will include their innate desires. Their physical characteristics and their instinct, in the case of animals, will be passed on to their progeny. Within two verses “seed” and “after their kind” is repeated six times.

"Let the earth sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, *and* fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so.¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.

(Genesis 1:11-12)

In fact, the point made here is a major point of the first chapter. Every living thing produces from its “seed,” “after its kind.” The phrase is repeated over and over.

² There is some question as to whether God would create something that was empty and thus posits that this creation’s empty and void is from a prior creation that had been judged. However, God acts often in a process in that where He begins is not where He ends. He created the man and saw that it was not “good” for man to be alone. The point was that He was in process and it was not complete until the woman had been added. God is here in process. He will not pronounce this creation “very good” until it is complete.

And now when the God speaks regarding birds and fish he includes another word, “multiply” as well as “fill,” and of course it will be “after their kind.”

²¹ God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

(Genesis 1:21-22)

Then God moves from the vegetables and the birds and fish to the land animals. Here in 1:24-25, two verses, the phrase “after their kind” is repeated five times.

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. ²⁵ God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

(Genesis 1:24-25)

Thus it becomes overwhelmingly clear what the purpose of all living things is; to produce a copy of themselves and place within that copy the ability to reproduce another copy. In other words, birds and fish are to multiply, to be fruitful, and make “images” of themselves, which will make another image and so forth.

Man to Reproduce “after Our (God’s) kind” (i.e., represent God’s desires): 1:26

Yet the flow of the storyteller’s tone changes when he gets to man. Following the continual repetition of “after their kind” one would expect the phrase to be repeated with man. Yet when God comes to man, instead of the awaited, “Let them reproduce after their kind,” God says, “Let us make man in OUR image.” In other words, the important thing for man to do, is not to reproduce himself, but to reproduce God. In 1:26 He gives the order for man to reproduce “after Our (God’s) kind” or, as the text states, “In Our image.” But what is it about God that man is to be, and to reproduce? God has not revealed Himself to man physically, but has revealed His character through His “voice.” Thus, the point is that man is to have God’s desires (character) and reproduce God’s desires, not something apart from God’s desires. Man is to formulate his own desires in accordance with God’s character. “Image” means “to represent.” Thus man is created in God’s “image” and is thus “to represent” God. The only way that man can have this is if he has a character that “loves” God’s character and wants to emulate it. In a few verses (1:28), God will tell man to “be fruitful and multiply” as He did to the fish. Fish will reproduce copies of their bodies and their instincts, while man is to reproduce and multiply the image of God.

Man to “Rule” over Creation: 1:26, 28

Probably the most important thing that God’s desires for man is that man as God’s agent (“representative”), would rule over this creation. Genesis 1:26 states clearly, “Let them rule . . .” over all the creatures (animals). Genesis 1:28 restates that man must rule over the animal kingdom, thus dominating the created world on behalf of God.

When one fast forwards to the end of the Biblical Story, the final phrase of the narrative (Revelation 22:5) fulfills to this original purpose “. . . and they shall rule forever and ever.” God’s purpose for man will ultimately be successful. This is His plan. There is no other. Man will rule over God’s physical creation. Period.

I have my desires, just like all of us have desires. However my desires are often not carried out. As the head of my home there are things that I like to see happen. But they don’t always happen. There are things that get in the way, things that conflict, events that prevent my desires from happening. But that is my world. It is inconceivable that God would not get His desires fulfilled. He is sovereign. He needs to listen to no one or account for Himself to no one. He is the One who controls events. He is the One who can create, kill, recreate, resurrect, give life and judge as He desires. Could anyone suggest that God would not get what He desires? God desired a physical universe in which He will be represented fully by man and woman . . . 100%. And He will get it. Satan will not ruin it, nor will He even get God to change His desires one little bit. Believers will not go to heaven and float around forever as a replacement for this earth which was created for them to rule. Earth is not a practice field for the real thing in heaven. Man will be resurrected bodily and live on a physical earth forever. Why? That was God’s desire. He doesn’t change His plans because Satan interrupts them. He will rule through a Man over a created physical universe. And the best part is . . . that I will be there, physically . . . with both feet planted firmly once again on *terra firma*. And my presence there will say one thing . . . God got what He desired in the beginning.

“Be Fruitful and Multiply and Fill the Earth”: 1:28

This phrase, “be fruitful and multiply” is used earlier for birds and fish. Clearly in their case they were to multiply the physical. Thus fish will reproduce little fish, along with a natural instinct that is inherent to fish. Birds will do the same, that is, reproduce a “physical” image along with instinct.

But when God comes to man and tells him to multiply, He does not say for man to reproduce “after his kind.” So, the question is, what is man to multiply? The answer is,

“the image of God.” In other words, while all the animal and vegetable kingdoms will reproduce their physical image along with the innate instinct, man alone will reproduce the image of God. That image is God’s character, revealed by His word, by His voice.

Isaiah speaks of the knowledge of God (i.e., His character) being multiplied throughout the earth at the culmination of the story. The word for “full” is the same root as “fill” in Genesis 1:28.

“. . . For the earth will be full of the knowledge of *YHWH* as the waters cover the sea.

(Isaiah 11:9)

Knowing the Hero, His Self-Revelation

Since the man must follow the desires of God’s character, then the question arises as to how man will know these desires? The *only* way that God is revealed is through His Word, His voice. Note that all of the physical creation arrives by means of His Word, “And God said . . .” In Genesis 2, God reveals Himself specifically to Adam by “speaking” to Him directly and giving Him commands. Nothing is known about this God that is not revealed directly by God’s word.

It is quite important to note the relationship of knowing one’s character and their speech. Very succinctly, one’s character is known by listening to them. Man will justify himself (i.e., reveal his personal philosophy) by speaking. Thus God’s Word reveals His character, His desires. Man’s voice also reveals His character. Thus Deuteronomy talks of the heart (character) and one’s teaching (confession).

Deuteronomy 6:5-6 tells them to love the Lord with all their “heart” (or character) and to take His Words (the revelation of His character) and make it their character.

⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

Then in 6:7 He tells them to “teach” it to their children. So in other words, their character (which was to be like God’s character) is to be taught to the children (confessed by mouth) so that they would make it their character as well.

⁷ You shall “teach” them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

False prophets were known by their words as well, whether they conformed to the *Torah* or not.

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes true, **concerning which he spoke to you, saying**, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³ **you shall not listen to the words of that prophet** or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 13:1-3)

Jesus reflects exactly this in Matthew as He states that the words reveal the character, and thus identify false prophets.

³³ "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for **the tree is known by its fruit**. ³⁴ "You brood of vipers, how can you, **being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart**. ³⁵ "The good man brings out of *his* good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure what is evil. ³⁶ "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ "For **by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned**." (Matthew 12:33-37)

Probably the largest thing to see here is that God is known only by His self-revelation in His Word. It is the only way one can know His character.

“And God said . . . “

All that comes forth in Genesis 1 comes through the Word of God. It is this unseen, unknown God who is revealed in time and in this physical world by His Word. When He speaks light comes forth, planets come into being, vegetables appear and reproduce, as do birds and fish and animals.

“And God saw . . . “

The indication of God “seeing” is not an indication that God suddenly decided to take a look through some physical perception. What it does mean is that God “evaluated” or “assessed” and then “determined” (made a self-judgment about) the value of what He had created. But on what basis does this evaluation take place? There is no other scale present than God’s character. Thus God evaluates based on the desires of His own character. God “saw” and thus evaluated whether this creation accomplished, and thus

represented, His desires? Then He alone determined that it was good with respect to His character.

Perhaps at the end of the day, I might fall into bed and say to my wife, “I see that it was a good day.” What I am saying is that I evaluated and determined (“saw”) that the events of the day accomplished my desires for that day.

“. . . that it was good” (טוֹב , pronounced “tov”)

“Good” (טוֹב) is an evaluation or a “value” and thus means that it conforms perfectly (is a perfect representation) of God’s own character (His desires). Thus, in short, God evaluated and determined that this creation had accomplished exactly what He desired. Note very clearly that when “God saw” He was evaluating from His own character what was “good.” It was not relative, nor to be determined by man, or any other criteria. God alone determined “good”. Thus one should always want to find “good” based on how God sees it, not how one sees themselves based on a relative criteria (e.g., as compared to others, or on one’s own feelings).

One might wonder how it is that God gets to evaluate His own character, since it is obvious that He would determine it as “good.” But that is the point. In the beginning there was only God’s character and only His evaluation mattered as the determiner of “good.” Therefore, and from then on forward, everything must come back to be evaluated by the source, God’s character. It is that way because it is that way! There can be no other evaluator of good and, by definition, evil. Man ultimately can judge good, and thus evil, only because God tells him what is good and what is evil as determined only by God Himself.

One only has to go to the statement by Jesus when confronted by the rich young ruler in Luke 18:18-19. Here Jesus is quite clear that the only source of “good” is God.

¹⁸ A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

Genesis 2: The Creator's Desires for His Representatives

The setting then continues into Chapter 2 with the Creator detailing His desires specifically for His representatives, the man and the woman.

The Man (2:4-7), a Living Being

The narrator now sets the scene of this Creator as if He was a potter, sitting at His wheel and making His pottery. In order to give the man “life,” God breathes into him. Without this breath he is just a good-looking piece of pottery-like material³. With breath he can now think, move and act on behalf of this God.

The Garden of Eden (2:8-14), a land from which to rule the earth

This Creator then grows a garden into which he places this man, this ruler. The garden is a special place for this man to operate. It is from this central location on the earth from which he will rule on behalf of God. The description is one of great beauty. There is nothing that will not enhance this man's life. The foliage is lush and fruitful, desirable to look at, and “good” (*tov*) to eat.

The author then points out that there are two specific trees in the middle of the garden, the “Tree of Life” and the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” These, of course, are mentioned particularly as they will soon become significant.

Another notable thing beside the great foliage that lies in the garden is the vast amount of water that comes from the garden. Not only will this garden be lush, but also is the source of water for the lands that lie beyond the garden. This life-giving water, needed by all the foliage, will be sourced from the realm of this ruler for God.

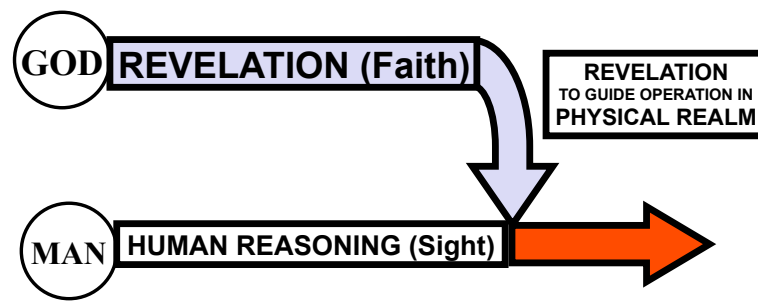
The Specific Representation Command (2:15-17)

Now the Creator moves to reveal something to man that man could not see with his human eyes. God will reveal what man must do to represent the desires of His Creator (i.e., “image God”). Note very clearly that Man cannot obtain these instructions through human reasoning, or by physical observation. These instructions can only be known by revelation. The man is to keep the garden and till it. In addition the man may eat from all the trees of the garden. They are for his pleasure to look on, to take, and then to eat.

³ James references this when he states in James 2:26, “For just as the body without breath is dead, so also faith without works is dead” (Author's translation).

But all this does not seem to be anything more than what would be the natural desire of the man. In other words, to eat of the fruit is something that he wants to do from his own desires. He wants to look on it as something pleasurable, take it, and eat it. This God created this world to be enjoyed by man and so what man sees conforms to what God has said.

But part of this detailed instruction includes a command that cannot be known from his natural perception and desires that come through his physical perception. Man can know solely because the Creator has *told* the man about God's unseen desires. God's desires are that Man must restrict himself from the fruit of one tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That tree has desirable looking fruit. It also is edible. Yet it is not the Creator's desire that man operate on his own eyesight (self-determination, what man determines ("sees") as good), but on God's view of things ("God saw . . ."). If he is to be God's representative then he must do what God says and understand how God "sees" things (determines) regardless of how man "sees" things (determines). He would then be truly God's representative who rules "in God's image," as one who can represent God's desires and not his own view of things.



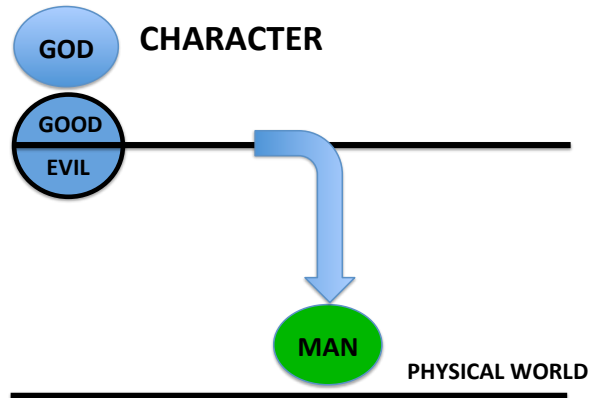
**IN "OUR" IMAGE:
REPRESENTATION OF GOD IN CREATION**

C. Baylis
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"Good and Evil" as Determined by God's Character

In Genesis 3 Adam and Eve will obtain the "knowledge of Good and Evil." But the question arises as to whether they "knew good and evil" prior to Genesis 3. The answer is very obvious. Yes, they did! "Good" was the character of God and all creation was also good as an accurate representation of His desires. This was demonstrated in His creation when He pronounced it "very good." Evil was also clear. Evil was the rejection of what was "good." However, in Genesis 2, evil had not been experienced, but it was known in concept. To eat of the tree would be against the desires of God, and thus evil.

The point is that God’s character was the only determiner of “Good and Evil.” God’s character was “good.” All else was evil. The chart following shows that concept, that is, that God’s character was revealed to man so that man could know (determine) it for himself. That alone was his criteria of “good and evil,” because God alone determined it.



Now that it has been determined that man was aware of what was “good” (God and His desires for creation) and what was evil (potential: acting against those desires), the reader must take up the issue of this “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.”

If there was a tree in my backyard called the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, “ and I invited you to eat of it, just what do you think eating that fruit would do for you? Of course, you would answer that eating it must impart some sort of “Knowledge of Good and Evil.” And that knowledge would clearly be something that you didn’t have. In eating it you would gain something. So this is really quite simple. The name of the tree tells the benefits (or in this case, liabilities) of eating its fruit. If they eat it they will gain “the knowledge of Good and Evil.”

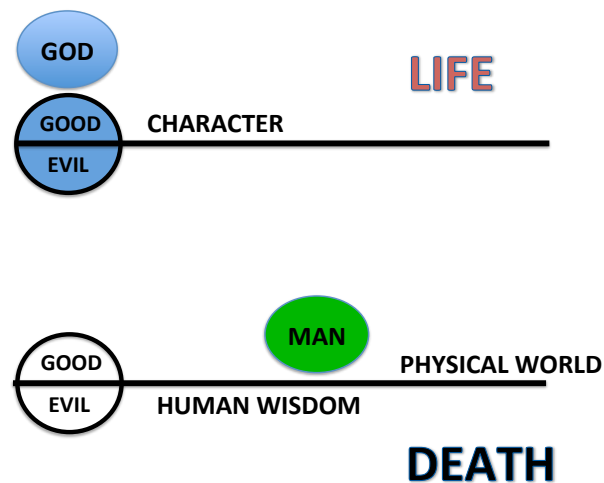
So if they were aware of “good and evil” as determined by God before Genesis 3, then what knowledge would they get about “good and evil” that would be “new?” Very simply it would be:

When the man and woman ate of the tree, they would receive a knowledge of good and evil that was not determined by God, but would be determined by their own, newly found, character.

Now it was clear that anything other than God’s determination of good was evil. Thus this new knowledge that they would have was, by definition, evil. It is opposed to

God's determination of good and evil. It is a depraved determination. It is man's new evil character. It will determine good and evil based on man's own perspective, not God's.

To look ahead in Genesis 3, man and woman will sin and then they will receive a different character than God and will begin to determine "good and evil" from their own self-centered perspective. From that point on, man will "see" from his own perspective and will begin to re-define what is "evil" and what is "good." It will not be the same definition as God's since man's character will determine it from himself as the source. He will re-create God in his own image, thus "seeing" God through his own eyes (not through the self-revealing "sight" of God) and make a god that fulfills his own (man's and woman's) desires. Man will follow his own desires, his own perception of right and wrong. This will be called "death" because it is separated from God's character desires, that of "life."



Thus there are two alternatives; to "see" (determine) as God "sees" (revelation) or to "see" (determine) as man "sees" (human wisdom). Very simply one might say that it is one's "value system." God's value system (how He "sees good") is perfect. Man's value system (how he "sees good") is depraved. Some examples follow in the Biblical story.

"Eve saw that the fruit was good, that it was pleasing to the eyes, and that it was good to make one wise . . . and she took it."

Here Eve determines through the deceit of Satan that the value of disobeying God's "good" was her "good." So she acted ("took") to fulfill her (Satan's) desires.

Later in Genesis 6:2 the “sons of God (men) saw that the daughters of men were good and they took them . . . “

Thus these men “looked” through their own depraved perception and determined the value of women fit their view of “good” and acted (“took”) to please their own desires.

Later in 2 Samuel 11, David looks over the palace wall at Bathsheba and “saw (determined) that she was good (value system) exceedingly to the (his) eyes and he sent men and they took (implemented his desires) her.”

In the Judges, the depravity of self-determination of good and evil is seen as every man “did that which was right in his own eyes.” Samson saw a woman of the Philistines and told his parents to “get her for she looks right in my eyes” (Judges 14:3).

But the Messiah, who has the character of God, is spoken of in Isaiah. This future Davidic King, Jesus, “. . . will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; ⁴ But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth;” (Isa. 11:3-4). Thus the New Adam, the Davidic King will “see” as God “sees.”

Later in the Epistles Paul will reference the same human depravity or value system as man “walks in the flesh” or “walks by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

But at this point in the narrative, Genesis 2, man still must choose, either to follow God’s character or, following Satan’s soon temptation, to gain his own character.

The Woman: A Helper to Be One Flesh

The setting seems to be over at 2:17. The man has been created and has been given his marching orders. If the story had jumped from the warning of 2:18 to the serpent in 3:1, no one would have likely noticed that anything was missing. But there is another, a very important item, without which the story cannot go on. It is the addition of a woman to the man. Her addition to the man is the desire of God. It is only here that God says, “It is not good” with regard to man being alone.” This does not mean that something was wrong, but simply that God had not completed implementing His desires. The woman was an important and indispensable part of God’s desire. She would be man’s helper to rule. But there was something more than that. She, another being, would be one flesh (e.g., “body”) with him. They, who were two, would be one. As a fellow “image,” she would be a joint inheritor of the promises of God.

⁷ You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

(1 Peter 3:7)

This is an important item. As his companion, his helper, she would provide aid for his leadership in following God's desires. She would be as he, "one flesh" (2:24), but, in addition, would be one more to help. As one they would enjoy an intimacy that could not be experienced by anyone else. Yet in being one, should she rebel, it would be like having his own body rebel against itself. He wouldn't be able to separate from her since once they were made "one body," they could not be made back into two bodies. But as one body, he couldn't live with her in rebellion (or vice-versa).

Anyone who has had a family member rebel against the other siblings, or against their parents, or a wife or husband who turns on their respective spouse, has sampled it. The secret whispers they shared, the laughs, the tears, the secrets, even their weaknesses with which they were so transparent, are now mocked openly and publically by the rebelling party. One's private thoughts and moments not meant for public consumption are mocked in front of the world and are meant solely to bring shame to the former mate. Their good efforts done on behalf of the other are now twisted and mocked as evil. It is a rebellion done by someone from the inner circle. It is the most hurting act possible as it is done with a weapon only available to an intimate companion. The Psalmist expresses this in Psalm 55.

¹² For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear *it*; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. ¹³ But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend. ¹⁴ We who had sweet fellowship together, Walked in the house of God in the throng.

(Psalm 55:12-14)

Thus the relationship of a man and a wife will be uniquely tied to one another. This union is to express the character of God's sacrificial love to one another. The relationship is to represent God Himself. Each will look out for his partner above all others, including himself.

Man's Partner cannot be an Animal since there is no "Image" in an animal

The purpose of parading the animals in front of Adam is two-fold. First of all, as far as the physical is concerned, everyone knows that there can be no physical union

between man and animals. Not only doesn't it work, but it is also an abomination to God. But there is something more than that. No animal can help man out since no animal has the "image." It was given only to man in Genesis 1:26. This image gives man the ability to represent God. Inherent in that is the ability to perceive God, to have theological thoughts and reasoning, to alter one's behavior based on the revelation of God.

But the second purpose is about to show up. This parade of "no image" animals reminds one that animals cannot consciously interact with God (perceive His voice). So when a serpent enters the scene in a few verses (3:1) and is able to dialogue about God, the reader knows this serpent is not just an ordinary snake created in Genesis 1. There is something beyond the natural here, something "super"-natural. And it is because of the inclusion of this event, the parade, evaluation, and naming of the animals, that helps the reader realize that this is no regular serpent. Like the false prophets of Israel yet to come, His speech betrays his character (Deut. 13:1-5), a character beyond that of a simple snake.

Thus, if one is to represent God, they must have a similar character, one that recognizes God and His desires, and one that is able to reflect that character by speaking and communicating their desires. Thus when the snake appears he speaks and that reveals a character that is theologically astute, and theologically depraved, something not given to animals. Animals don't have a theological character nor are they able to reveal it in speech.

Now there is one more thing. Note that Adam "names" the animals. A superior authority normally "names" the one under their authority. Thus, this review reminds the reader of Genesis 1:26, 28. Man was to rule over the animals, as he alone had the image of God. Animals do not and so must be dominated by man, be under his control.

"A Man Shall Leave . . . and they, two, shall become one flesh"

There are some very precise commands in the setting of Genesis 1—2. One of them obviously is Genesis 1:26, 28, where man is to rule and multiply the "image." The other is in Genesis 2:24. While this verse is typically allocated to being pronounced at weddings, it is of utmost importance in the literary message of Genesis (and the Bible). Interestingly, while the man is seemingly the focus ("a man shall leave . . ."), it has much to do with the woman. While it does describe the man's action, it brings the woman into partnership with the man, yet the woman is the one through whom God will deliver His inheritance.

"For this reason . . ."

The final statement of the narrator here contained in Genesis 2:24 follows Adam's conclusion regarding the woman being "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (2:23). The verse (2:24), without question, references the previous context where God created the woman from the man. In other words, marriage is not instituted in Genesis 2:24, it is instituted in the story of Adam and Eve when she is removed from his side and declared to be a helper, a partner in ruling in the image of God. Adam's declaration that she is like him ("bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh") indicates that she has the same legal rights as he does (as if she was "kin")⁴. Thus, the statement of 2:24 is a response or a conclusion from the foregoing event when Eve was brought from Adam's side, which constituted the marriage of Adam and Eve.

"A man shall leave his father and mother . . . "

Since Adam had no father and mother this obviously looks ahead to the new situation that will come. But the new situation ("a man shall leave his father and mother . . . ") is initiated in order to duplicate Adam's marriage where God took Adam's mate from his side. Since a man cannot take a wife from his side as God did with Adam, he must do something equivalent. If one wanted to find one about whom they could say, "this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," the most likely possibility would be his sister since she truly has the same bone and flesh from the same parents. But that is not to be, that is, taking his sister as a wife. Thus the purpose of the following verse (2:24) explains how to achieve making a woman "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" apart from taking from one's own family.

And this is the point of "leaving father and mother." That is, man is not to try to duplicate Eve's similarity to Adam by finding a sister, but he must "leave" the bloodline and the natural family. Thus, the "leave" here indicates strongly that the man must find someone who has no connection to his immediate family, one who does not have common flesh. The issue here is that one in the immediate family naturally would receive the inheritance of the father. It is this that one must leave . . . their father and mother's familial inheritance.

Now we must stop for a moment in this discussion and recall the point of all this. The point (remember Genesis 1:26, 28) is that man reproduces the image (obedient) of God in sons (physical) who will reproduce it again ("be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth"). Thus, the point of this "son" who leaves his father and mother is not that he is becoming disassociated from them since his very function is to reproduce what they give (gave, give, will give) him (image of God and seed). Thus this process in 2:24 is to develop the basis from which the

⁴ "Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" in part or in the whole is used throughout the Old Testament to indicate "kin" or a "family" relationship. Genesis 29:14 quotes Laban as indicating a similar phrase toward Jacob as his nephew, his sister Rebekah's son. See also Judges 9:2, 2 Samuel 5:1, 2 Samuel 19:12-13, 1 Chron. 11:1.

“image” will be multiplied which has been handed down from the father and mother. Thus this unity’s purpose is to produce seed and image. This is what is known as the “inheritance.” Inheritance is all that a father and mother give of themselves to their children, thus “seed” is central to any inheritance.

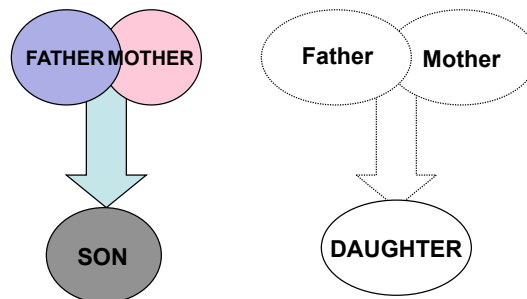
“And shall cleave to his woman . . . “

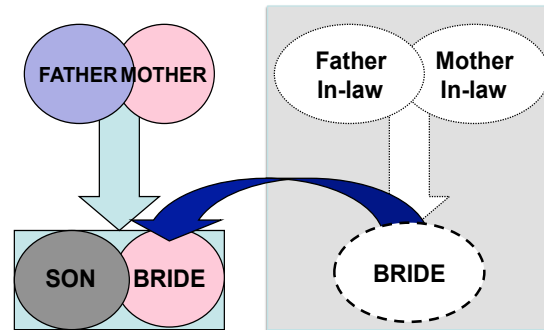
Man is to go outside of his “kin” (who have the right of inheritance) and obtain someone who is not of his “kin” (who do not have the right of inheritance). Then having gone and gotten one who is not naturally common flesh (“leave”), he will make her common flesh by “cleaving” to her.

This is done through the vow that one takes before God when they are married (recall that one’s words reflect their character desires). In other words, she does not become common flesh with him by nature (not of the same father and mother) or by some physical process (sexual union), but by non-physical means, by speaking a word. Of course, it is already seen that the non-physical “unseen revelation” of God is known by His speech. Thus the way one indicates a character desire that cannot be seen, and has not yet been demonstrated, is through words, through a promise, through a vow. Thus by speaking a word of truth, a vow, one’s heart (character) desire will be known. The man will cleave, indicated by the speaking of a vow, to a woman and she will be his wife.

“And they two shall become one flesh.”

And then, while in truth her flesh is no different than it was before, she is treated as if she was common flesh with him (“one flesh”), having the same rights to the inheritance (seed and image of the father and mother) as he has. Thus it can be inferred that this “non-physical” means of “cleaving” is so strong that it equals having the rights of a natural-born son. She is as he is.





The declaration here is that she (the one who does not have kinship or rights to the father's inheritance) shall become as he is with respect to his rights to the father's inheritance. She is like he is, "kin". As he inherits; so will she. As he has rights to his father's seed, so will she. In other word, with respect to the rights of inheritance, she is like him (even more than a sister.) She is just as if she was taken from his side, as Eve was from Adam.

Thus, in today's society where one-half of all marriages end in divorce, even in the church, this "one flesh" bond clearly is not perceived (i.e., "seen," determined, or valued) as it should be, that is, unbreakable. However, it is quite clear in Genesis 2 that this "one flesh" cannot be remade to be "two." Note that what the man and the woman do, is "cleave." But that act does not make them "one flesh." They can only cleave. God makes them "one flesh" when they cleave (vow). Thus Jesus states, "what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6).

This one flesh was so unbreakable that the bride would retain rights to the father and mother's inheritance even if the husband died, since she was legally like a sister or a natural daughter. Thus, the ability of the husband to divorce his wife became impossible, since she had "blood" rights to the inheritance and related directly to the parents as he did; as one. The phrase is literally, "and they (plural) shall become, with respect to flesh, one (singular)." The point is that the two become one. The one cannot become two again.

Paul's discourse on marriage in Ephesians 5:28-31 validates the Genesis 2:24 bond.

²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS

FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE
TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

In other words, Paul is simply stating that the wife is as her husband, his body. Thus the church is as Christ, His body. Both the wife and the church are like members of the respective body (e.g., hands, feet, heart, etc.) and are to be considered as part of it, to be cared for as “one flesh.”

The principle of “one flesh” is validated by Jesus in the New Testament as He states that divorce is not a possibility, since the legal ramifications of one flesh are even more than that of brother and sister, since the wife is one flesh with the husband, as if his own body. In fact “the kinships established by marriage are therefore not terminated by death or divorce.”⁵

“And the man and his wife were naked and were not ashamed”

Before leaving the setting the author makes an observation. The man and the woman were naked but they were not ashamed of their nudity. The issue is that they were physically exposed before God. “Shame” is always an indication that one feels judged as evil. If one is ashamed before another it is because they feel judged as evil due to some misdeed they have committed. Here their nudity is related to their physical exposure before God. Their conclusion was (i.e., “saw”) that they had nothing to be ashamed of.

God was still the determiner of “good and evil.” In God’s perspective, He “saw” that they were “good.” Thus there was no judgment, no reason for fear or shame, since they were in agreement with God’s character. Soon they would choose to have their own, a different, character and would become evil and would be ashamed and would fear judgment from a God who “saw” things differently than they “saw” them.

This is also interesting since it is a preface to what is to come. The narrator is relating their nudity to their inward shame, or lack of shame. Soon, Adam and Eve will connect the two again. The way they will do it is to cover their physical nudity to hide their inner shame. Obviously it could not work. And that invention will only reveal that their view of how to cover their sin (“see”) is different than how God “sees” it.

Summary

Literarily the storyteller has impacted the reader with some important points that will guide the rest of the plot.

⁵Wenham, G. J. 1998. *Vol. 1: Word Biblical Commentary : Genesis 1-15* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; Word Biblical Commentary. Word, Incorporated: Dallas.

- The Hero: God:** God and His desires have been revealed and will emerge in the end in victory. The reader will want to know this God, as God's desires (philosophy) must guide man.
- God's Desires:** The desires reflect the character of the Hero, God, and are to create a physical universe in which man, who is to rule over the creatures, will represent Him.
- "And God saw . . ."** Since God is the Hero; His view ("God saw . . .") is the criteria by which good is to be, and will be, established. No other view is acceptable. This is what man is to seek.
- "That it was good."** Again, God is the establisher of what is good. No one else can determine it. Good is the reflection of God's character, His desires.
- "In Our (God's) Image:** Man was to "represent" God's character alone. God would reveal His desires. They would not be obtainable through man's eyes (physical evaluation).
- "A Garden"** God placed man in a garden, from which he would rule the world on behalf of God.
- "A Helper"** The woman was created to help man to rule. She would be "one flesh" with him and they were to bond to demonstrate the sacrificial love of the character of God.
- Good and Evil** God is the determiner of "good" and "evil" from His own character and its desires. There is no other source, nor determiner of good and evil. Any other determiner will be, by definition, depraved. Only by acting on God's character will man be unashamed before God.
- "shall surely die"** Life is the character of God. Only from His character does life emerge. Once man separates from that character to determine "good and evil" from his own perspective, he will have death. It is all he can do.

The "setting" has set-up the rest of the story. It has indicated the potential, soon-to-be-realized, point of conflict. When God introduces the potential conflict, and its consequences, "in the day that you eat of it (the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of

Good and Evil”), you will surely die, one knows innately what is about to happen. If one knows how literature and plot works, that sole negative warning is an indicator of what will soon come to pass. And it has implicitly opened the expectation for an antagonist to appear, one who will assume a role diametrically opposed to the Hero, the Creator. The story line is predictable . . . the antagonist will attempt to get them to eat of the tree . . . to obtain a knowledge of good and evil determined by their own character, a new value system, not God’s.

As surely as stories move, and plot changes . . . death awaits.